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Just the bear facts...

BLM and State
team up to study
black bear habitat in
Interior Alaska

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BLM wildlife biologist Winston
Hobgood holds a black bear cub, tak-
ing care to minimize handling of the
animal.



Invading the black bear's den



Dan Gullikson

BLM wildlife biologist Winston Hobgood and Alaska Fish and Game biologist John Hechtel examine a black bear sow and her cub. After being weighed, mom gets a collar and the youngster is tagged.

Winston Hobgood, wildlife biologist for the Bureau of Land Management, feels black bears embody the mystique of Alaska. "They appear often in the legends and literature of our state," Hobgood says. On the practical side, Hobgood comments, "They are an important part of the boreal forest ecosystem, as well as being popular with subsistence and sport hunters."

Wildlife biologists from both the Bureau of Land Management and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game say they still know relatively little about the bears and their habitat in Interior Alaska.

BLM began studying black bear habitat and use areas in Interior Alaska with the State last summer, and continued to support denning operations this spring. Because the interests of the two agencies dovetail, they teamed up to accomplish field work more economically.

The state has been studying the ecology and population dynamics of these bears for the last five years. "BLM needs to know more about the timing of bear movements, when and how they use different areas, the condition of their general habitat and their crucial use areas," says Hobgood, who works in BLM's Steese/White Mountains

District. Hobgood says that long-term, ecological information collected during the study will help guide BLM's land use planning in bear country.

"When we encourage the public to use certain areas of public land, we need to find ways to reduce impacts on bear populations and to reduce conflicts between bears and people," Hobgood says. "For instance, we would avoid creating or permitting campgrounds, roads, trails and other surface-disturbing activities in crucial bear habitat."

This past April, Hobgood accompanied State Fish and Game biologist John Hechtel to a bear den located with the help of a radio collar. After snowshoeing over the deep snow, Hechtel uncovered the entrance to the den and evaluated the situation; a sow with one yearling was inside.

"Bears have a remarkable form of hibernation," Hechtel says. "They don't eat, drink, urinate or defecate for six to seven months. They exist in a state of deep sleep, with depressed respiration, heartbeat and temperature. And they will wake up when disturbed."

Once the sow was immobilized, her collar was replaced with a larger one. The

biologists use break-away collars that fall off after a year and a half, according to Hechtel. This prevents problems for young, growing bears, and ensures that bears aren't left wearing the collars after the batteries die.

After taking standard measurements and tattooing the cub's lip, biologists attached a unique color-coded tag to its ear. "Young bears accompanying females aren't collared, but the markings allow us to indentify individuals in the future," Hobgood says.

Biologists are finding that northern black bear productivity is low. Hechtel says females first produce cubs at six to seven years of age, and then only every three or four years afterward.

Hunting also impacts the black bear population. Although hunting pressure is low in most of Alaska, hunters in accessible areas around population centers such as Fairbanks further reduce the juvenile bear population, according to Fish and Game harvest figures.

Hobgood says the amount of food available during the summer affects survival. "Bears are omnivores—they eat whatever they come across, live or dead. Even in good years, they have only a few months to fatten up, but the summer of 1992 was especially short, with a late spring and early winter snow. This sow weighed only 117 pounds and the cub was 24 pounds—they were in very poor condition."

After recording the data, the biologists placed the bears back in their den and covered the entrance carefully. The den was on the military-withdrawn land known as the Tanana Flats. Military-withdrawn land is land set aside by the BLM for use by the military. The Army uses the area for exercises and a bombing range, and controls all public access. Except for certain restricted zones and periods of restricted general access, the Tanana Flats is open for public recreation use by snowmachiners, four-wheelers, pilots, fishermen, hunters and trappers.

"The BLM is directing its efforts toward ecosystem management and integrated resource management," Hobgood says. "That means each activity is affected by another. Resource specialists can no longer concentrate on one tree or one species, but must look at the entire forest. They must see the big picture. And we need to know how bears fit into that big picture, and their importance to the ecosystem."

—Sharon Durgan Wilson



Volunteer BLM musher plots Iditarod Trail



BLM natural resource specialist Norm Messenger fixes his position with a Global Positioning System unit on Flat Horn Lake, about 40 miles from Wasilla on the Iditarod Trail.

The world has a better idea of where the Iditarod Trail is located now that Norm Messenger has traveled it.

Messenger, natural resource specialist in Nome for the BLM Kobuk District, worked this year as a volunteer race official with the 1993 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

For Messenger, working on this project was a labor of love. He took time off from his job and used his own snowmachine to work as a race volunteer.

Joining the race in Wasilla, he rode sweep behind the mushers, picking up debris and keeping track of the stragglers. The pace allowed him to stop about every six miles to record his location with his hand-held Global Positioning System unit. He described the position in a log for about 600 miles of the trail.

Messenger and two other race officials continued to ride sweep until they reached Kaltag, where they found three mushers stranded by a storm. Blowing winds had left the trail covered with nearly two feet of fresh powder snow.

At Kaltag, the trail leaves the Yukon River and goes overland to Norton Sound. Messenger and the mushers broke trail to Unalakleet.

When they arrived, they found nine other teams trapped by the snow.

"By this time, the race had divided into two parts," Messenger said. "One group had already finished and was in Nome. The other group had been stranded in Unalakleet for three or four days."

Local residents helped find the trail, which was buried under 50 inches of powder in some places, and the snowmachiners led the mushers out. They struggled for three days, stopping often to dig the snowmachines out of the loose snow, before reaching Nome.

Messenger has worked with the Iditarod Trail since he came to Nome with BLM in 1989. As a national historic trail, the Iditarod is managed under a comprehensive plan prepared by BLM. BLM also issues permits for the race to cross public lands.

BLM maintains about 20 miles of trail between Solomon and White Mountain. Winds funneling down from the mountains make this section one of the most dangerous parts of the Iditarod. This year Beverly Masek and John Schandelmeier were trapped for 16 hours until race officials led them to safety.

What is global positioning?

The Global Positioning System uses satellites much the way old-time navigators used the stars to fix their position on the globe. A hand-held unit receives signals from three to five satellites, and then triangulates the signals to locate the user's position to within 10 meters of its actual coordinates on the globe.

Messenger used GPS to plot locations on about two-thirds of the 1,000-mile trail for the BLM. Back in Anchorage, the data was transferred to a computer which can then draw a map of the trail. "It's another piece of the puzzle in making an accurate management map of the Iditarod corridor," he says.

Messenger says the GPS could have many uses along the Iditarod Trail, including surveying and mapping boundaries and features along the trail. It can also show a musher's exact position and distance to the next checkpoint.

Beginning last summer, Messenger had built more than 150 trail markers. Shortly before the start of this year's race, he placed the markers along the trail with the help of Kobuk District Ranger Mike Billbe and two race volunteers.

Messenger is already looking forward to next year's Iditarod, which will veer from this year's trail at Ophir and follow the northern route. In time, he hopes to plot the entire Iditarod Trail and connecting trails with the Global Positioning System.

Kobuk District Manager Helen Hankins said that Messenger, working on his own time, has performed a valuable service for BLM. "Applying GPS to the Iditarod Trail gives us an important new tool for managing the corridor," she says.

—Andy Williams

BLM cabins get a workout in Iditarod Race



Danielle Allen

The Bear Creek Shelter cabin. Another cabin, the Rohn River roadhouse, has a roof made from flattened Blazo cans.

Someday, BLM employees Andy Gifford and Jake Schlapfer can tell their grandkids about trying to get some sleep in a shelter cabin cramped with mushers and sled dogs during the Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

In mid-March, when Gifford and Schlapfer were hauling trash by snowmobile and checking on mushers using the Iditarod Trail, they decided to stay overnight at the BLM's Bear Creek shelter cabin.

"We didn't get much sleep," said Schlapfer, an outdoor recreation planner for the BLM's Anchorage District. The cabin, 25 miles from Nikolai and located in the Fairwell Burn, proved to be a popular respite for the mushers. This year's race, rerouted to pass by the cabin, added to its popularity. "Mushers were coming in at all hours with their dogs," he said.

Schlapfer has long wanted to be on the trail during the race. "I issue so many permits for the Iditarod Trail that to meet the mushers and get to know them, and make sure they're complying with the conditions of our permit, is quite satisfying," said Schlapfer.

For Gifford, a law enforcement

special agent for BLM's Campbell Tract in Anchorage, it was business as usual. "BLM manages 418 miles of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and it's important that we have a presence on the lands we manage. Many of the snowmobilers, mushers and lodge owners we met didn't know BLM is the agency that coordinates management of the trail," says Gifford.

For five days, Gifford and Schlapfer rode their machines between Nikolai and Deshka Landing. When they weren't hauling trash or cleaning a cabin, they informed trail users of BLM's management role on the trail. They assisted people with broken down snowmachines, and they were helped by the people of the town of Nikolai when their own sled needed repair.

It's a tough life mushing on Alaskan trails, and a shelter cabin can be a very welcoming sight.

—Danielle Allen

Snowmobilers just miss Redington

Jake Schlapfer, Anchorage District outdoor recreation specialist, was sure he would cross paths with Joe Redington some time during the 1993 Iditarod Sled Dog Race. They had talked about it when Redington visited the BLM Anchorage District in January. Redington was checking on a permit that Schlapfer was processing which would allow him to travel BLM-managed lands along the trail. Fondly known as the "Father of the Iditarod," Redington was foregoing the 1993 sled dog race in favor of leading a private party of dogsledding clients across the trail to Nome.

However, Schlapfer and Gifford, choosing to travel the challenging Dalzell Gorge, went south out of the Farewell Burn and missed Redington on the way to Rohn River. Redington's party, coming north from Rainy Pass, decided to bypass the gorge for the safer Ptarmigan Pass on route to Rohn.

This year, instead of competing in the Iditarod Race, Redington offered clients the opportunity to mush the Iditarod Trail, sharing the same experiences as the competing mushers but at a more relaxed pace. The success of this Iditarod venture may encourage more ecotourism events in Alaska.

Redington, long-time proponent of the trail and a familiar face at the BLM's Anchorage District, said at a recent advisory council meeting, "There is so much to do on the Iditarod Historic Trail, but I'd put shelter cabins at the top of my priority list. Every cabin built by the BLM has been worth every cent."

Sweepstakes Trail is in the running

Historic Alaska sled dog route nominated to be part of National Recreation Trail System

When this century was young, people were flocking to Alaska in the frenzy for gold. Early pioneers forged a sled dog trail linking the booming town of Nome to a remote mining camp on the other side of the Seward Peninsula.

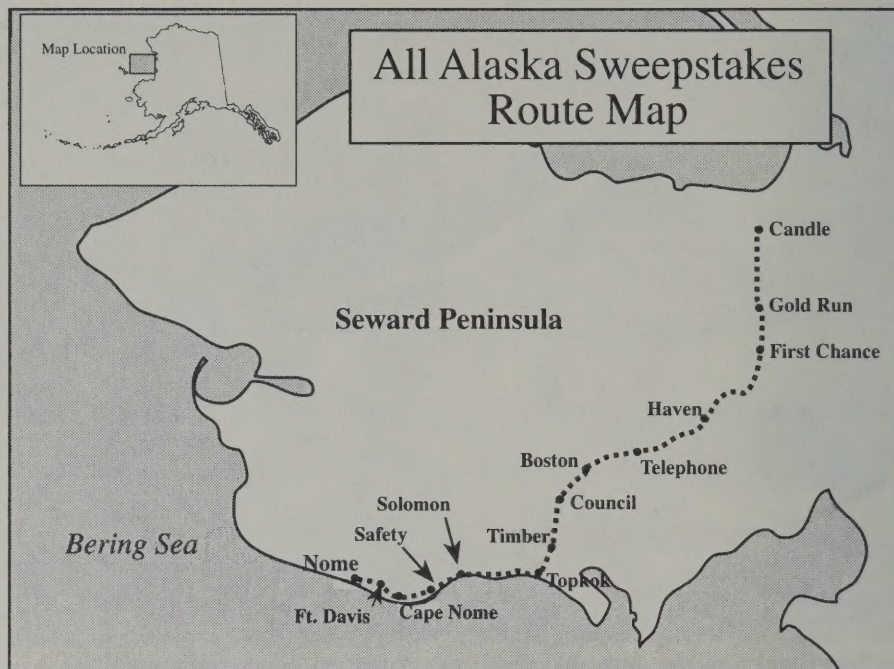
BLM is preparing to nominate this early route as a part of the National Recreation Trail System. The 412-mile trail follows the telegraph line from Nome to Candle. In 1908, during Nome's prosperous gold rush days, Candle was a bustling mining camp on the south side of the peninsula.

To break the monotony of winter, and to promote the breeding, raising and training of Alaskan sled dogs, the Nome Kennel Club sponsored the Sweepstakes Race between the two communities.

The race was run nine times from 1908 to 1917 and reportedly was Alaska's first organized long-distance sled dog race. Leonard Seppala was a three-time consecutive winner in 1915, '16 and '17. Seppala was a dog musher who won national fame for his part in rushing serum to Nome in 1925 to halt a diphtheria epidemic.

Candle had a population of more than 200 in 1910, but only one family lives there year-round today. The trail between Nome and Candle is used chiefly for inter-village travel, hunting, and recreation during the winter months.

The All-Alaska Sweepstakes Trail begins in Nome and follows the Iditarod National Historic Trail



for 50 miles. It leaves the coast at the old Eskimo village of Topkok and turns northward into the heart of the Seward Peninsula. Passing the old mining town of Council, it crosses McCarthy's Marsh, climbs more than 2,000 feet over the Darby Mountains, and drops into another marshland called Death Valley. The trail passes an old mining site known as Camp Haven, about 125 miles from Nome. Continuing northward, it reaches over the continental divide and drops into the Koyuk River lowlands. Farther north, it follows the Kiwalik River, passing a number of active and abandoned gold placer mines as it winds into Candle.

Larry Field, natural resource specialist with the Kobuk District, says the designation would provide national recognition of the trail and make it part of our national heritage.

"The Sweepstakes Trail is a winter trail that should be recognized for its value in the history of Alaska sled dog racing and its significance during the gold

rush era on the Seward Peninsula," says Field.

According to land records, 78 percent of the land along the trail is publicly owned and 22 percent is owned by various Alaska Native corporations. Currently, BLM manages 50 percent of the public land and the state of Alaska manages 28 percent. Most of the BLM land along the trail was selected by the State in December 1992, under the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Claims Act.

Field began researching the possibility of designating the Sweepstakes Trail as a national recreation trail after the 75th anniversary running of the race in 1983. Norm Messenger, a BLM natural resource specialist in Nome, also worked to prepare the nomination.

Helen Hankins, BLM Kobuk district manager, says the Alaska Department of Natural Resources recently announced the State's support of the nomination.

—Andy Williams



BLM intern strikes paydirt with gold rush history

University of Alaska Fairbanks student Darrin Gambelin recently made some exciting historical discoveries while working on an internship with the Bureau of Land Management.

Gambelin worked with Howard Smith, an archeologist with the BLM's Kobuk District, to research the history of Livengood, an old gold rush town on the Elliott Highway about 70 miles north of Fairbanks.

Smith is researching the history of mining areas in the Kobuk District under a national BLM initiative called "Adventures in the Past." The program will educate people about the importance of cultural resources.

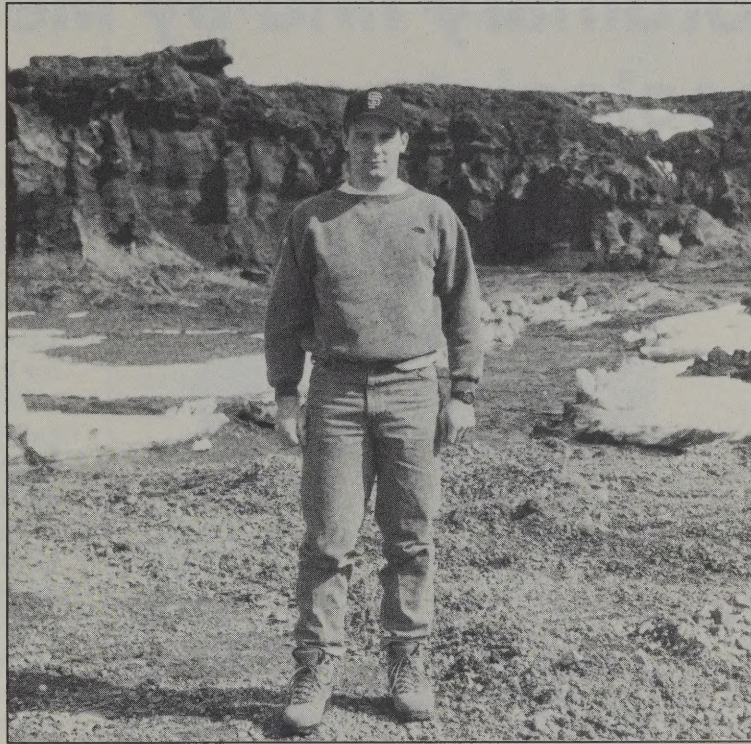
The trouble is, Smith says, "there is no single source you can go to for the history of Livengood or many of the other mining districts. With this research, we can create handy sources that will help us in our everyday management of cultural resources."

The community of Livengood began in 1914 with the discovery of gold by Ted Hudson and Jay Livengood. "It's fair to call Livengood the last gasp of the gold rush era," Smith says.

The town boomed for several years, reaching a population of about 4,000 in 1918. Population numbers declined in the early 1920s as the gold played out. Mining activity in the area continues to this day, but now there are only a handful of residents.

For Gambelin, the research project took on elements of a detective story. "Howard gave me a few names of people to interview. I would interview them and they would give me a few more names," he says.

Gambelin hit paydirt in his search when he interviewed a person whose mother had lived in Livengood during the early years



Darrin Gambelin stands in front of an active mining operation near Livengood. The UAF student researched the history of the old gold rush town as an intern with the BLM.

and had written a manuscript about it. Molly Cassidy's unpublished account describes the community at the time she arrived as a 14-year-old girl in 1915. It forms the basis of the report Gambelin wrote about the research project.

Smith says Gambelin's findings eventually will be included in a BLM publication about Livengood. Information will also be displayed at the Fred Blixt public-use cabin, which the Kobuk District maintains at mile 62 of the Elliott Highway.

Gambelin, a 20-year-old junior majoring in natural resources management, spent more than 120 hours on the project. He was one of about six UAF students serving internship programs with BLM this year.

Smith praised Gambelin's work as a valuable contribution to knowledge about Livengood. "I think it was great," he says. "We were able to get something done we

would not have been able to do without the intern."

Helen Hankins, Kobuk District manager, says internships are designed to give students hands-on experience with professionals in their field of study and a broader perspective than the classroom can provide.

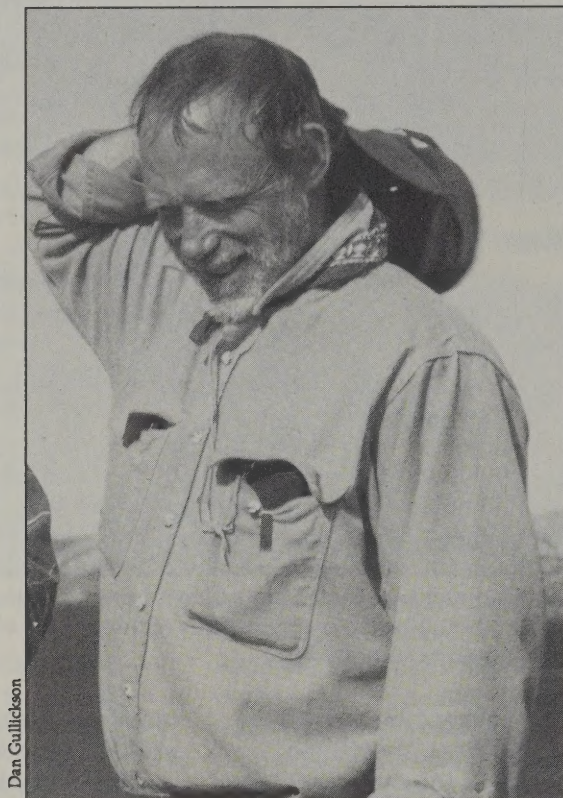
"It's valuable for us. We get energetic, enthusiastic students who have lots of new ideas and current thinking they get from their college courses," she says.

Gambelin says he is interested in pursuing a career in recreation land use management. "Interpretation, such as the history of Livengood, fits right in with what I want to do."

—Andy Williams

Digging for answers

Luck plus hard work leads to extraordinary find by Mesa Site archaeologist



BLM archaeologist, Mike Kunz takes a breather to survey work (and swat mosquitoes) at the Mesa Site excavation.

"I may have been born in Texas and raised in New York," says Mike Kunz (rhymes with runs), BLM archaeologist for the Arctic District, "but I always knew I would come to Alaska."

Kunz, whose ties with Alaska are buried deep, says, "My great grandfather came north during the Klondike Gold Rush in 1898. I read his diary and was intrigued by Alaska." Another root was planted when Kunz' father served in the arctic during World War II, about the time Mike was born.

Archaeology and paleontology always interested Kunz, but he says he didn't get serious about them because he didn't think he could earn a living. "Once I took a few anthropology courses at college, I got so interested I didn't care whether I could make a living or not," Kunz says. He earned his

bachelor's degree at Eastern New Mexico University, and did graduate work at Washington State University.

"In graduate school, a classmate asked me to give him a hand one summer at Healy Lake, Alaska," Kunz says. "He was working for John Cook (now the BLM Steese/White Mountains District archaeologist), excavating a site for John's doctoral dissertation. Now John and I work together."

Kunz and his wife, Patty, moved to Alaska in 1970. In 1978, he was doing environmental compliance work associated with oil and gas exploration activities. Kunz became curious about a 200-foot mesa rising above a flat, open river valley in the northern foothills of the Brooks Range. Climbing to the top, he discovered a breathtaking, 360-degree view of valleys and distant hills.

A closer inspection of the ground revealed several broken projectile points and stone flakes, indicating the presence of an archaeological site. Having studied Paleoindian cultures of the southwest, Kunz realized these artifacts seemed much the same.

"Finding the Mesa Site was just dumb luck," Kunz says. "Granted, I had the background to realize the site's potential importance, but I just happened to be at the right place at the right time. I have a bush pilot friend who always says, 'No amount of planning will ever replace dumb luck,' and he's right."

From 1978 to 1992, Kunz and his colleagues conducted preliminary work, initiated field and laboratory research, published articles, and engaged in serious excavation. The payoff came when charcoal from a hearth excavated in 1992 produced the site's oldest radio carbon date —11,700 years ago.

This spring was a flurry of activity. In March, Kunz and his colleague, Dr. Richard Reanier, traveled to Washington, D.C., for a national press conference conducted

simultaneously in Washington, Anchorage and Fairbanks. "I'm awed at the coverage by news media," Kunz says. "The story was carried on all the major television networks, the front page of the New York Times and Chicago Tribune, and countless newspapers across the United States and Canada."

This summer, Kunz will spend three weeks at the Mesa Site. Then he will investigate other sites in the area, looking for correlating evidence that might shed more light on early Paleoindians in Alaska and their origins.

"We've dug less than three percent of the site now, and hope to complete our investigation by 1996 before we disturb even 10 percent."

Kunz will also continue work on the obsidian hydration project, a more broadly applicable and less-expensive method of dating archaeological sites. He, Reanier and Cook are refining the method so that it will produce reliable results in arctic climates.

"Technology for identifying and dating archaeological sites has improved drastically in the past few years and will undoubtedly improve even more in the future," Kunz says.

Kunz thinks the best part of being an archaeologist is being out of the office. However, he says, archaeological field work in the arctic can be an adventure.

"Once we were stranded at an excavation site due to bad weather," Kunz said. "By the time it cleared several days later, our aircraft was diverted to carry firefighters to a wildfire. Meanwhile we were running out of food. Things didn't look good—we were getting hungry and had no idea how long it would take the aircraft to get back to us. One afternoon a pair of wolves jumped and killed a caribou just across the creek from our camp. We watched while they ate their fill. When they retired for naps, we snuck over and turned the carcass over to the uneaten side. We cut off enough steaks to eat heartily another five days until we were picked up."

The discovery of the Mesa Site has been a great experience for Kunz. "Every scientist dreams about being involved in a discovery with the potential to reshape theories in his or her field," he says. "Probably 99 percent never get to experience that."

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

Jurassic Park author, director link up with BLM

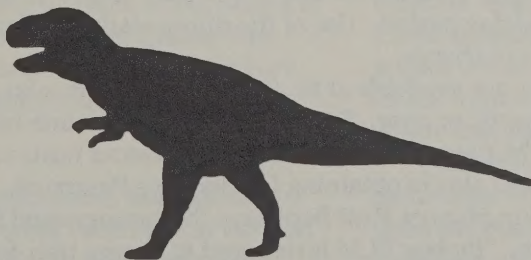
As the American public focuses on *Jurassic Park*, a new movie about dinosaurs, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is making moviegoers aware that it manages some of the world's most significant paleontological resources.

The BLM is working with Michael Crichton, the author of *Jurassic Park*, and with Universal Studios to develop a series of television and radio public service announcements concerning the search for dinosaur bones and other fossils. The PSAs feature actors and film clips from the movie, and will be appearing nationwide throughout the summer.

According to BLM Director Jim Baca, "Few Americans realize that dinosaurs such as *Tyrannosaurus rex* and *Stegosaurus* have all been found on BLM lands. The PSAs will familiarize the American people with their paleontological legacy and encourage them to preserve and protect these valuable resources for future generations to study and enjoy."

To discover more about dinosaurs, BLM recommends a visit to museums such as the Alaska State Museum in Juneau or the University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks. BLM has a small display of Hadrosaurid dinosaur bones and a mammoth tusk in the Alaska Resources Library in the Anchorage Federal Office Building.

—Ed Bovy



Sourdough Campground launches boat ramp

River runners and anglers who use the Gulkana River will be happy to learn that the Glennallen District's Sourdough Creek Campground will be open to the public for boat launching from June 25 to August 2, 1993, despite the construction in progress at the site. The campground, located at mile 147.6 of the Richardson Highway, has been undergoing renovations for the past two summers. Once again, BLM will be able to provide the public with access to the Gulkana River during the peak use that coincides with salmon runs and the Fourth of July holiday.

Camping sites and a boat launch will also be available throughout the summer season at a temporary campground one-half mile to the north.

The new Sourdough entrance road, parking area and boat ramp are now complete. To be added this summer are a river observation shelter, trails, a new campground loop with 47 drive-in sites with fire rings and tables, and additional parking.

Several other features also scheduled for construction this summer and during the spring of 1994 will make Sourdough Creek Campground more accessible to all.

Wide trails with finely crushed gravel will lead from the boat ramp and campground areas to where Sourdough Creek enters the Gulkana River, providing easier passage for strollers and wheelchairs. There, a fishing deck and fishing ramps will offer individuals who use wheelchairs the opportunity to enjoy fishing and sightseeing opportunities.

"It's looking pretty good," reports Larry Kajdan, outdoor recreation planner for the Glennallen District. "When it's finished, most of the campground facilities will be universally accessible."

Construction will continue at the campground through 1994, and possibly into 1995. Future plans include additional walk-in camping sites and trail work, a boat dump station and a fish-cleaning station.

—K.J. Mushovic

BLM putting up new recreation facilities this year

BLM is installing five new wayside exhibits along the Denali Highway this summer. Two of these will be "orientation panels" at miles 13 and 115. The others will describe the archaeology of the Tangle Lakes District (at mile 22), area wildlife (mile 50) and geology (mile 94).

Work continues this summer on the Dalton Highway Recreation projects. Construction has started on a campground at Marion Creek, about 6 miles north of Coldfoot. This will be the first developed public campground on the highway and is expected to open in the summer of 1994. Building these projects is a cooperative effort—the Alaska Department of Transportation/Public Facilities is working with funds from the Federal Highways Enhancement program. Also this summer, as part of a civics project Girl Scouts will complete the landscaping at BLM's Arctic Circle Wayside.

On the Taylor Highway near the U.S. border at Mount Fairplay, a new welcome sign and orientation map will be installed. A trailhead sign and a wayside exhibit sign along the Steese Highway are also planned.

And finally, depending on funding, a contract may be awarded to start work on the \$4.2 million Nome Creek Gateway Project in late August.

Campground passports and fees

BLM's Paxson Campground at mile 175 of the Richardson Highway is now a U.S. Fee Area. Use of the campsites between the hours of 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. requires registration and payment of \$6.00 for a drive-in site, and \$3.00 for a walk-in site, per night. Check-out time is 3:00 p.m. and stays are limited to 14 days during any 60 day period. Use of the dump station at Paxson Campground is still free of charge.

Golden Age Passports are available at no charge to campers who can supply proof of being age 62 or over. Fees will be reduced to one-half price for campers who have the passport. Volunteer campground hosts will assist campers in registering and also in obtaining Golden Age Passports.

BLM outdoor recreation planner Paul Boos says the campground fees are used to maintain the site. "By law BLM is required to charge user fees for recreation facilities with camping spaces, water, toilets, tables, etc.," says Boos. "We just upgraded Paxson Campground last year. Since we're upgrading Sourdough Campground this year, we'll probably charge fees there next year," he says.

Short summers mean busy days for BLM

Things are hopping in Alaska this summer—and it's not just the crickets. The Bureau of Land Management's five districts in Alaska have a full schedule planned, including building and maintaining public campgrounds, new shelter cabins, wildlife studies and archaeological field work.

Recreation

Improvements to the Sourdough Campground include a boat ramp, river observation shelter, trails and new drive-in camping sites. There will also be campground patrols and maintenance along the Taylor Highway.

In the Anchorage District, BLM will be moving a cabin to Unalakleet for storage; later, it will be installed at Old Woman.

For hiking enthusiasts, trail maintenance is ongoing between the Borealis-LeFevre and Caribou Bluff cabins, and from the Caribou Bluff cabin to the one at Windy Gap. Plans call for maintenance of the Tripod Flat cabin and trail to Kaltag, and the Bear Creek cabin near McGrath. In the Utility Corridor there will be campground patrols, and maintenance and survey of the trail. An inventory of ATV trails will be taken in the Steese/White Mountains District in July.

People who enjoy river boating or rafting will appreciate the instream flow gauges to be installed on Beaver Creek, Birch Creek and the Fortymile River. These gauges help rate the floatability of streams or rivers. A low floatability rating means users are more likely to scrape bottom and hang up on rocks or gravel bars, making it necessary to get out of the boat and drag it across shallow reaches. After inspections during the summer, the gauges will be removed in the fall.

Independence Day events include the Denali Highway



Multisport Race (mountain bike and foot race). A BLM swiftwater rescue team will be floating on the Gulkana River for visitor protection.

Shoreline cleanup continues along the Fortymile River, as does cleanup along the Dalton Highway, including the wayside trash cans.

Various road improvement projects are located at Marion Creek and Cripple Creek campgrounds, the Davis Dome/Mt. Fairplay Wayside Exhibit, MacKay Creek and Pinnel Mountain trailheads, and the Blixt Cabin entrance road.

For people who don't mind learning a thing or two on their vacation, educational opportunities abound. Information panels will be installed on the Denali Highway, and bulletin board displays will be put up at all Glenallen District campgrounds. There are speakers at the Coldfoot Visitors Center this summer, and tours of historic Fort Egbert through September.

Mining

Inspections and hazardous materials work continues at the Red Top mine site in Red Devil, near Dillingham. In the Utility Corridor, there will be visits to a hazardous materials site and an abandoned mining claim.

Archaeology

Archaeological activity continues at the Mesa Site. Meanwhile, archaeologists are also busy at Galbraith Lake, Indian River, and in the Tangle Lakes area.

Wildlife

BLM's commitment to the conservation of wildlife and fisheries continues. There will be a survey taken of the peregrine falcons at Colville River near Umiat in the Arctic District. Biologists will be collaring caribou at Teshekpuk Lake in July, and doing wilderness and fisheries surveys near Ivotuk and Toolik Lake.

Kobuk District biologists will be busy with waterfowl brood counts in the Kuzitrin Basin and Pah River flats, and there will be a public meeting of the musk ox management team in Nome.

Unalakleet will be the site of subsistence monitoring and an inventory of Kilbuck bears. Wetlands work is scheduled for June in King Salmon, and there will be a burn study in Bear Creek, near McGrath, in July.

Steese/White Mountains District wildlife biologists are monitoring spring and fall wildlife migration, and will be doing an inventory of watchable wildlife and a survey of breeding birds. Fisheries biologists are studying population inventories, and the spawning and summer feeding habitats of Nome Creek grayling. In August, there will be a float trip down Beaver Creek to investigate the practicality of live-trapping black bears.

And in its fight to lessen environmental damage from forest fires, the Alaska Fire Service will be installing mountain top radios.

Alaska's brief summer means a lot of work must be done before the long northern winter descends.

—Janet Malone

Alaska's fire season is in full swing. As of June 16, there had been 324 fires with a total of more than 100,000 acres burned. The combination of hot, dry weather and numerous lightening strikes in Interior Alaska helped start this year's blazes. Smokejumpers from the National Interagency Fire Coordination Center have worked at many of the fires, as well as village emergency firefighter crews, BLM-Alaska firefighters and State of Alaska crews.

Archaeologist Michael Kunz of BLM's Arctic District gave a public lecture in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada in May. Kunz, whose discovery of the 11,700-year-old Mesa Site in northern Alaska recently made international news, was invited to speak by the Yukon Science Institute. Kunz discussed how the Mesa Site discovery affects current theories about the peopling of the new world, as well as a historic overview of the Paleoindian culture that used the site.

Outdoor Week, the largest environmental program conducted in Alaska, was held May 10 to 14 at the BLM's Campbell Tract in Anchorage. This year, more than 2,200 sixth grade students attended the event. They learned about the environment and natural resources through hands-on activities outdoors. The program, now in its 18th year, is co-sponsored by the BLM Anchorage District Office and the Anchorage School District. BLM taught map and compass skills, gold panning, fisheries ecology and fly tying. There were also archaeological sessions on food gathering and how ancient hunters threw spears to hunt for big game.

Other agencies involved included the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Alaska Public Lands Information Center, the U.S. Park Service, the U.S. Bureau of Mines, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the school district's Martin Luther King Career Center, the U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division, the U.S. Minerals Management Service and the Boy Scouts of America.

BLM now has a job information hotline people can call to get the latest job openings. To hear a 5-minute recording of all job vacancies, both permanent and temporary, in BLM-Alaska, call (907) 271-3122. The message includes the vacancy announcement number, position title, wage or GS level, job location, eligibility requirements, and opening and closing dates of the vacancy. The message is updated each week.

More than thirty-four pages of recreational opportunities in Alaska are listed in the newly published guide to recreation on BLM lands, *America's Secret Recreation Areas* by Michael Hodgson. Each state chapter includes maps and a "best-of" section listing five to ten sites that are must-sees or ideal recreation destinations. Chapters also include the geographical regions of each state, and an information overview with all the addresses and phone numbers for the various BLM offices.



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